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RECOMMENDATIONS
ON
AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION
SUBMITTED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN
TO THE
MASS CONFERENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF FARM ORGANIZATIONS



WASHINGTON, D. C.
JANUARY 11, 1936

All unbiased students of agriculture agree that, because of the peculiar physical nature of agricultural production, which does not lend itself to factors of adjustment employed by industry or labor, legislative aid of an effective character is necessary in order that farmers shall enjoy economic equality or parity for their output in relation to the returns enjoyed by industry and labor.

Business, industry and labor can control volume and quality of production by rules of their own making, unaffected by the seasons and the processes of nature. Agriculture, on the other hand, is tremendously dependent on sunlight, moisture and favorable climatic conditions. Agricultural output cannot be quickly adjusted to meet market changes. Without legislative aid, farmers cannot control the factors that govern the volume of any crop they produce. We, therefore, appeal to American business men and others to recognize these fundamental differences and to join us in a general and permanent program designed to establish genuine "Equality for Agriculture". Such equality, in the long run, is as necessary to the

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welfare of American business as it is to the welfare of agriculture itself. Agriculture either must be given authority to avoid price-ruining surpluses or protected against the disasters growing out of such surpluses. The advantages given industry through our governmental tariff system must be offset by some corresponding governmental benefits to agriculture. A just government committed to providing "an American standard of living" for industrial workers cannot ignore the justice of maintaining equally high standards for our agricultural citizenship.

We furthermore insist that agriculture is entitled to the sympathetic recognition and cooperation of all other classes when we proclaim that the welfare of agriculture is vital to that "general welfare" our Constitution was designed to promote. The future of all America rests primarily upon the preservation of soil fertility. The welfare of business and all classes is dependent upon policies that will prevent a recurrence of those agricultural depressions and maladjustments that have brought the panics of 1873, 1893, 1921 and 1932. All business, as well as agriculture, benefited from the price-lifting program of the Agricultural Adjustment Act. We now appeal to business to join us in building up the most effective possible machinery to carry on its objectives and to give farmers and manufacturers alike the continued enormous benefits of increased farm purchasing power.

We believe that legislation for this purpose should be based on the following principles:

1. That the Secretary of Agriculture be empowered by the Congress of the United States to provide for the rental and withdrawal from commercial crop production, at equitable rates, of such land as may be necessary to promote the conservation of soil fertility and to bring about a profitable balance of domestic production with the total effective demand at profitable prices.

Such a program to provide for rentals of (1) a given percentage of the total tillable acreage or where this is impracticable, (2) an adjustment by quota of the volume of such product, or (3) on a basis involving both acreage and volume, and such payments to be conditioned upon the individual farmer having adjusted his cultivated acreage or the commodities on such land in such quantities as may be necessary for the preservation of soil fertility and proper stabilization and maintenance of adequate price levels.

2. That Congress provide adequate funds by appropriations for the carrying out of this soil conservation and price adjustment program.

3. That provisions be made for the levying of reasonable taxes upon the processing of the different classes of livestock and dairy products. Whenever approved by an adequate number of producers and used only in consultation with producers of these products, such funds to be used for the purpose of expanding our foreign and domestic outlets for such products in such manner as would be beneficial to the domestic market and profitable to the producers thereof.

4. That all of the valid provisions of the Agricultural Adjust-

ment Act be retained and strengthened and particularly those relating to marketing agreements and orders of the Secretary of Agriculture; and Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act as amended, providing for the use of 30% of import duties for the expansion of foreign and domestic outlets for farm products.

5. That the marketing or distribution of all farm products, which may come into the hands of the agency of government administering this program shall be done wherever practicable through farm commodity cooperatives qualified under the Capper-Volstead Act.

6. That the foregoing statement is based on the fundamental assumption that the American market should be preserved for the American farmer and in addition thereto the further expansion of our foreign markets for surplus crops.

7. Many matters of the most vital interest to agriculture are omitted from discussion in this report because of our conviction that it was better for us to concentrate on the single problem of an adequate substitute for the Agricultural Adjustment Act leaving the many great issues including the money question and others for the continuing action and attention of our ever-alert farm organizations.

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